UNDP

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF
CHINA

IPF:(1992-96) $176 600 000

(CPR/91/110) - Agricultural Development in Arid and Semi-arid Areas of Northwestern China

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	9 June 1993
Expected duration:	Five years
Proposed executing agency:	Government (China International Centre for Economic & Technical Exchanges) (CICETE)
Government implementing agency:	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$9 044 000
Total UNDP budget:	$9 044 000

Project background

The above-mentioned project covers six provinces/autonomous regions in the northwestern China comprising one quarter of the country's territory and seven percent of total population. The climate is typically continental with cold winters and annual precipitation of less than 250 mm.; the terrain is mostly sandy or loess; and soil erosion is widespread with water-induced erosion in the loess soils and wind erosion in the sandy dry areas. The arid and semi-arid areas in northwestern China is one of the poverty-stricken regions of China. The average annual income of local peasants is approximately (US)$ 70 per capita (1990) with some counties having the lowest income in the whole country. Agricultural productivity is well below the national average with annual grain import to the region estimated at one million tons. Although livestock is an important source of income, uncontrolled grazing has led to serious degradation of the vegetative cover.

The need for sustainable agricultural practices to break the vicious cycle of low agricultural productivity, environmental degradation and poverty is well recognized by the Government. Over the past 40 years, massive efforts were made to rehabilitate and improve the eroded rainfed loess plateau area. Integrated models were developed through UNDP/FAO assistance with large-scale follow-up investments by WFP and the World Bank. Likewise, UNDP technical assistance has also been provided for improved irrigated farming and on-farm water management to maximize massive investments already made in developing irrigation facilities. However, productivity continues to be low because of the lack of improved seed varieties, traditional agricultural practices, inadequate training of technicians and farmers, and lack of appropriate technologies suited to ecological conditions of the region.

[1/] This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

Description of project

This long-term objective of the project is to develop the arid and semi-arid areas of northwestern China which will contribute to sustainable increases in food production and improvement in living conditions of the people while maintaining or improving the agro-environmental conditions.

The immediate objectives of five components are to: (a) develop the capacity of Gansu Desert Control Research Institute for farm-oriented research, and demonstrate farming systems suited to desert areas based on assessment of needs of farmers and grazers in desert fringes along the Hexi Corridor; (b) strengthen the capacity of six existing key research and extension institutions of the region to improve genetic base of key crops and introduce improved tillage practices, crop management and water conservation techniques; (c) improve the institutional capacity and technical support system of Shaanxi Fruit Tree Research Centre to develop and extend virus free and drought-resistant fruit varieties; (d) strengthen the capacity of Gansu Academy for Mechanical Sciences to design, test and demonstrate prototype small and medium farm-machinery suited to agro-environmental condition of the region; and (e) develop human resources required for increasing agricultural productivity in the region through upgrading of six key agricultural middle schools in northwestern China.

In addition to the five components there will be a sixth Programme Support component for effective management, coordination and monitoring of various activities including technical backstopping, maximization of synergies between programme components and dissemination of results. The results of component activities will be demonstrated through integrated agricultural development models in selected pilot counties (one from each participating province). These counties will also participate in UNFPA projects for promoting women's economic activities, strengthening of MCH/FP services, and upgrading the skills of family planning workers. The integrated field demonstration activities under the programme will be dovetailed with UNFPA activities with a view to developing county "models" and maximize direct benefits to the farmers.

Inputs

UNDP will provide 117 work-months of international and 130 work-months of national consultants; 558 work-months of fellowships and 89 work-months of study tours; and equipment for laboratory, field testing and training activities.

Financial data

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Personnel	2 129 000
Training	3 134 000
Equipment	3 511 000
Miscellaneous	270 000
Total	9 044 000

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